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Recovery For All
HB6859- Support
SB1177- Support
SB1178- Support
SB1180- Support

I am a Hartford resident, a professor at Gateway Community College, and an ex-bartender who has family, friends, and students who still work in the service industry. These bills- HB6859, SB1177, SB1178, SB1180- would make a significant difference to so many families.

The fact that state law does not ensure paid sick days for the vast majority of workers in the state is a cause for concern *especially* given what we've experienced during the COVID pandemic. The inability to control your schedule is no way for anyone to live and presents huge obstacles to students who are trying to work their way through school- even more so for those who are trying to juggle work, school, and childcare schedules. Too many times, my students stop out of courses and of school entirely because they cannot manage their schedules and their pathway to a more stable life just keeps getting sabotaged. They just have no ability, no matter how great their desire, to make the required commitment to a school schedule and it is a vicious catch-22, because the stability they need to succeed in school is inaccessible as long as they remain in their current circumstances. But these workers should not need to switch jobs to escape this sort of precarity: there should be dignity and decency in all work.

For rideshare, delivery drivers, and tipped workers, our current way of doing things is a puzzle to most people and when we learn the history of tipped workers, we see that the that carve out for subminimum wage workers and tip practices were always a mechanism for exploitation and disempowerment—originally made tolerable in the wake of emancipation because it may have been inconceivable that those previously enslaved would enter the workforce on fully equal footing with the rest. Likewise, now that we all take these practices for granted, though very few of us understand why we do it or ever did it in the first place, it may seem inconceivable that it be any other way, but it is time to change. Workers should not be in a position that makes it impossible to budget with wildly fluctuating income and schedules, always at risk of an illness or interruption that would mean devastation or derailment. Research suggests that eliminating the subminimum wage would narrow racial and gendered earnings gaps- that is: it would be a step toward remedying the inequality the practice was designed to create, and in fact continues to perpetuate, in the first place. From what I see in the classroom, the sort of stability these proposed policies, taken together, would contribute to closing opportunity gaps also for those who desire a college education.